

In addition, please amend claims 1, 133 and 188 as follows:

1. (Four Times Amended) [Apparatus] System for controlling the placement of a shear-thinnable polymer composition into a porous web, having a three dimensional structure of a plurality of structural elements with interstitial spaces therebetween, comprising:
 - means for applying tension to the porous web;
 - means for applying a curable, shear-thinnable, polymer composition onto one surface of the tensioned web; and
 - means for shear thinning the polymer composition to substantially reduce its viscosity and selectively place it into the tensioned web to encapsulate at least some of the structural elements of the porous web by enveloping exposed surface portions of the structural elements[, thereby only partially filling most of the interstitial spaces between said structural elements].

133. (Thrice Amended) [Apparatus] System for controlling the placement of a shear-thinnable polymer composition into a porous web, having a three dimensional structure of a plurality of structural elements with interstitial spaces therebetween and a three dimensional top surface opposed from a three dimensional bottom surface, comprising:
 - means for applying tension to the web;
 - means for applying a curable, shear-thinnable, polymer composition onto one surface of the tensioned web;
 - blade means for engaging said one surface of the tensioned web;
 - means for moving the web relative to said blade means; and
 - means for controlling said tension applying means and said blade means to shear thin the polymer composition to substantially reduce its viscosity and to selectively place it into the tensioned web to encapsulate at least some of the structural elements of the porous web by enveloping exposed surface portions of the structural elements[, thereby only partially filling most of the interstitial spaces between said structural elements].

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188. (Thrice Amended) [Apparatus] System for controlled placement of a shear-thinnable polymer composition into a porous web, having a three dimensional structure of a plurality of structural elements with interstitial spaces therebetween, comprising:

means for advancing a porous web;

means for applying tension to the porous web;

means for applying a curable, shear-thinnable, polymer composition to the web;

means for shear thinning the polymer composition to reduce its viscosity and place it to encapsulate at least some of the structural elements of the porous web by enveloping exposed surface portions of the structural elements[, thereby only partially filling most of the interstitial spaces between said structural elements];

means for controlling the tension of the porous web during shear thinning of said polymer composition into said web; and

means for curing the polymer composition within the porous web.

Please add new claims 198-215.

198. (New) The system as set forth in claim 1 wherein said web is pretreated and impregnated with a fluorochemical prior to being treated with said polymer composition.

199. (New) The system as set forth in claim 198 wherein pretreating and impregnating with a fluorochemical comprises saturating the web with a liquid composition containing the fluorochemical and removing excess liquid composition by draining compression or drying.

200. (New) The system as set forth in claim 1 wherein said polymer composition is a silicone polymer composition including a platinum catalyst.

201. (New) The system as set forth in claim 200 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one vinyl substituted polymer.

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- 202. (New) The system as set forth in claim 201 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one organo-hydro-silane polysiloxane.
- 203. (New) The system as set forth in claim 202 wherein said polymer composition further includes fillers and additives.
- 204. (New) The system as set forth in claim 133 wherein said web is pretreated and impregnated with a fluorochemical prior to being treated with said polymer composition.
- 205. (New) The system as set forth in claim 204 wherein pretreating and impregnating with a fluorochemical comprises saturating the web with a liquid composition containing the fluorochemical and removing excess liquid composition by draining compression or drying.
- 206. (New) The system as set forth in claim 133 wherein said polymer composition is a silicone polymer composition including a platinum catalyst.
- 207. (New) The system as set forth in claim 206 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one vinyl substituted polymer.
- 208. (New) The system as set forth in claim 207 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one organo-hydro-silane polysiloxane.
- 209. (New) The system as set forth in claim 208 wherein said polymer composition further includes fillers and additives.
- 210. (New) The system as set forth in claim 188 wherein said web is pretreated and impregnated with a fluorochemical prior to being treated with said polymer composition.

- 211. (New) The system as set forth in claim 210 wherein pretreating and impregnating with a fluorochemical comprises saturating the web with a liquid composition containing the fluorochemical and removing excess liquid composition by draining compression or drying.
- 212. (New) The system as set forth in claim 188 wherein said polymer composition is a silicone polymer composition including a platinum catalyst.
- 213. (New) The system as set forth in claim 212 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one vinyl substituted polymer.
- 214. (New) The system as set forth in claim 213 wherein said polymer composition further includes at least one organo-hydro-silane polysiloxane.
- 215. (New) The system as set forth in claim 214 wherein said polymer composition further includes fillers and additives.

Remarks

Applicant extends thanks to Examiner Lorengo for the courtesies extended to Applicant's attorneys during a telephonic interview on October 24, 2000. Pursuant to that interview, Applicant has amended claims 1, 133 and 188 to more specifically recite the elements of the present invention. These amendments add no new matter, are fully supported by the application as filed, and should not be construed as limiting the appropriate scope of protection provided by the doctrine of equivalents.

Claims 1, 133-140, 143, 144, 146-154, 160-165, 179-183, 185 and 188-197 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) being anticipated by Caldwell. Claims 166-172 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Caldwell in view of Marzocchi. Claims 142, 145, 155-159 and 187 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Caldwell in view of Linscott. Claims 175-178 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Caldwell in view of Linscott and further in view of Marteness. Claims 141, 166, 173, 174, 184 and 186 stand rejected